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OMC to move hazardous waste

GALESBURG — Outboard Marine Corp. will remove about 300 barrels of hazardous waste, some containing cyanide solutions, from the former plant here, the company's senior attorney said today.

OMC, based in Waukegan, submitted a clean-up plan with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency in Springfield, David Donzal said in a telephone interview.

Although some cyanide is present in plating waste, the "bulk of waste is flammable liquid," Donzal said. In addition to the 55-gallon barrels, waste collected during the cleaning process will also be removed, he said.

Once the "paperwork is resolved," Donzal estimated the barrels will be removed within 30 to 60 days. He did not know where the waste will be sent.

OMC will work with several disposal companies and because the corporation did not have contracts, Donzal would not release any companies' names. Some disposal companies will only accept certain types of waste, he said.

An IEPA field inspector said about 300 barrels were at the plant when he inspected it in June.

The barrels contained paint thinner, degreasers, solvent and waste oil, Rich Johnson said, adding that the cyanide was waste from metal-plating operations at the plant.

Included in the plan are procedures to check storage areas for signs of contamination, Johnson said.

Currently, OMC has an interim permit from the U.S. EPA to store hazardous waste at the plant, Johnson said. The corporation would have been required to seek a permanent permit, he said, if it had not closed the Galesburg plant.

OMC stopped production last summer, and National Seal Co. has moved into the die-cast plant.

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DSI completes chips cleanup

By Stephen Heithoff
Telegraph staff writer

What is believed to be the most expensive hazardous waste cleanup in the history of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency — and the first of its kind in the nation — was completed Wednesday in Lee County.

The \$3.8 million detoxification of 14.5 million pounds of cyanide-laced film chips in Green River Industrial Park was finished when the last truckload of cleansed chips left the site Wednesday, said Jim Burke, an officer for Decontamination Systems Inc.

DSI, along with Mid-America Environmental Services Inc., completed the project in less than two months despite legal obstacles that caused officials to shut down the operation temporarily.

DSI will take the piping, pumps and tanks to downstate Canton, the same site the decontaminated chips have been taken. The company plans to establish a plastic reclamation facility there and currently is conducting a feasibility study.

The cleansed chips could be sold in their present condition, but their value is increased when the polyester is separated from the acetate.

What was thought to be simply the

polyester reclamation of the chips could turn into a more lucrative business venture. "It involves more than the chips," Burke said, declining to elaborate.

He did say, however, that DSI officials will tour a plant in Wisconsin that recycles scrap plastic next week.

However, DSI has no immediate plans to establish another decontamination facility.

That is one thing that kept Lee County officials on edge throughout the cleanup. Through courts in two different judicial circuits, they argued that the site was a regional pollution control facility and believed importation of the 4.5 million

pounds of Chicago chips would set a dangerous precedent.

Without the approval of the Lee County Board, the hazardous waste permits granted were invalid, they argued.

While a Cook County judge ordered the Chicago chips be treated in Lee County, a Lee County judge issued a temporary injunction halting the delivery of the chips.

The Illinois Supreme Court ruled Cook County had jurisdiction, and chips were trucked in. Lee County State's Attorney Eugene Stockton promptly appealed the ruling, seeking a clarification. Last Thursday, that appeal was denied.

Now that the job is complete, all legal

proceedings will probably become moot, Burke said.

DSI is talking with First Industrial Corp., owners of the Amboy industrial park, to determine the fate of the structures and cement pools where the chips were cleaned. Burke said First Industrial has expressed interest in using the cement pools as loading docks.

"We're taking the guts (of the operation)," he said. "The site is going to be in better shape than it was when we arrived."

So it appears that an issue that united some Lee County residents and polarized others appears to have run its course.